

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: March 6, 2006
Contact: **Sten Iversen**
Title: Montana Film Office Manager
Phone: 406-841-2876
Internet: siversen@mt.gov
<http://montanafilm.com>

Montana Now Offering Tax Incentives to the Film Industry

The Big Sky on the Big Screen Act now in effect

October 2005 – Montana's majestic mountains, city skylines, pristine rivers, golden fields of grain and much more all just got a little easier for filmmakers to reach – thanks to **new tax incentives initiated by Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer**. The new incentives took effect a few months ago and now, for the first time in the state's history, film, television, commercial and documentary productions working in Montana will benefit from a production incentive. It's all part of Governor Schweitzer's overall plan for economic development in Montana.

"This incentive makes Montana more competitive for the film industry since producers will now get a refundable tax credit on their Montana production expenses" said Director of the Montana Department of Commerce Tony Preite. "Plus, they can still shoot in the incredible landscapes we have in Montana, which consist of so many diverse types of scenery. We have locations that can double for Switzerland, Kansas, or even Afghanistan as well as plenty of classic Montana locations complete with beautiful mountains and rivers. Of course, one of our major draws is that you don't need a passport to shoot in Montana!" Montana Film Office Manager Sten Iversen.

Montana also has a newly appointed Montana Film and Television Advisory Council. The 28-person council, created by Governor Schweitzer, is responsible for promoting Montana to the film and television industries and providing advice to the Department of Commerce Film Office, the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Governor's office. The Council's members have experience in all types of film, video and still productions. Promoting the new tax incentives is one of the Council's first priorities.

The Big Sky on the Big Screen act provides two significant incentives including:

- 12% rebate based on hired Montana labor
 - This incentive applies to the first \$50,000 worth of wages paid per Montana resident.

AND

- 8% rebate based on qualified expenditures
 - These consist of production budget expenditures, including, but not limited to hotel and lodging expenditures, production equipment rental, fuel costs, expendables, lumber/construction materials, vehicle rentals and food and catering costs.

This incentive applies to all types of film and/or video productions including small and large budget feature length films, short films, commercials, documentaries, video, print ad, television series or television segments. It is also important to note that on top of these new incentives, Montana has NO sales tax which can be a significant factor in on-location shoots.

“The state and federal tax incentives, coupled with an able crew base, a willing film office, and diverse locations will make Montana a heavyweight contender in the fight to attract production money back to the United States,” said Christopher Cronyn, film producer and Montana Film and Television Advisory Council Vice-Chair. “The state and citizens of Montana will benefit by the creation of a major new economic force. This is truly a win-win situation.”

In addition to providing advice about ways the state can encourage and increase film, television and related media productions to the state. The Council will also work with the Montana Department of Commerce to sponsor workshops, seminars and festivals on film making, and assisting with film and televisions premiers and galas. A complete list of Council members can be found at <http://montanafilm.com/filmcouncil.htm>.

The Montana Film Office is part of the Montana Promotion Division in the Department of Commerce. The film office was established in 1974 to provide a wide variety of services, including scouting, production assistance, contact lists, resource directories and the *Montana Production Guide*, a 190 page guide produced annually. The Montana Film Office has an extensive photo library to provide customized photo presentations of Montana locations and maintains a website, www.montanafilm.com, which features updated information on location sites, support crews and services, plus a searchable database of location photos. The MFO also works as a liaison between production companies and federal, state, county, city and tribal government agencies as well as individual landowners and the general public. The office’s primary responsibility is to bring productions, such as feature films, commercials, documentaries, television programs and still shoots into Montana.

#